THE NEWS BULLETIN

OF THE

NEAR EAST CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

"... From Iran to Morocco, from Turkey to the Sudan..."

UNITED CHURCH BOARD FOR
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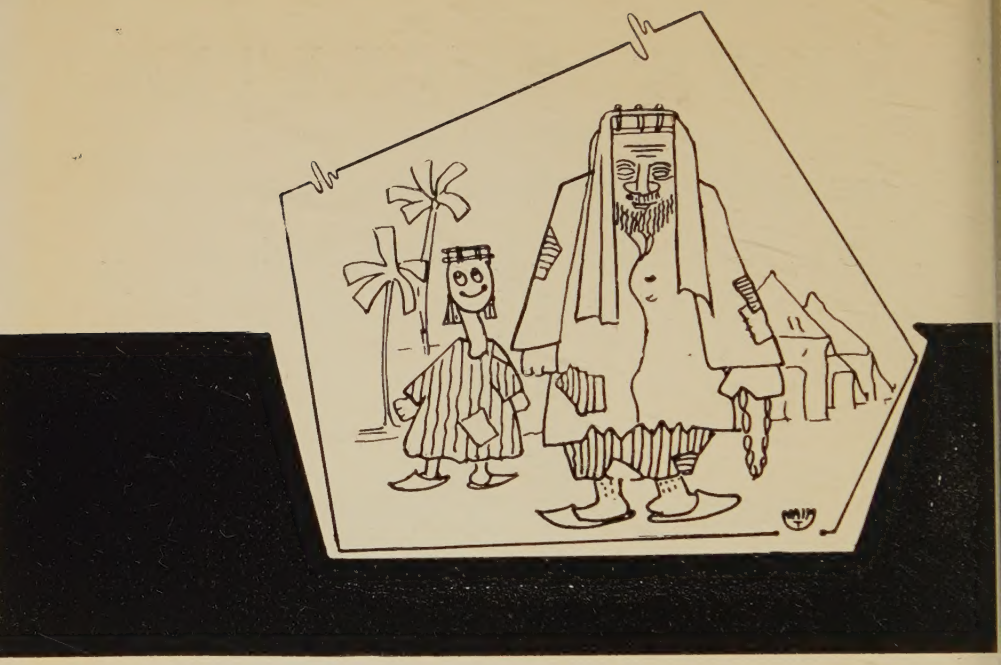
ADVENT – *1959*



World Refugee Year

On June 28, Mr. Dag Hammar joeld, the Secretary-General of United Nations, proclaimed the op ing of World Refugee Year, not that the fifty-nine member-gove ments of the United Nations w "convinced of the need to make a fu er world-wide effort to help resolve world refugee problem."

The World Council of Churc and the International Mission Council have renewed again their for prayers, intensified action and c tinuing charity on behalf of the wor estimated 45,000,000 refugees.

We are especially mindful of challenge in the Near East. On page you can read of what the Church done and should be doing for A refugees.

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ADVENT 1959

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Center Folio

The Church of St. Simon the Zealo

Shiraz, Iran

Editor

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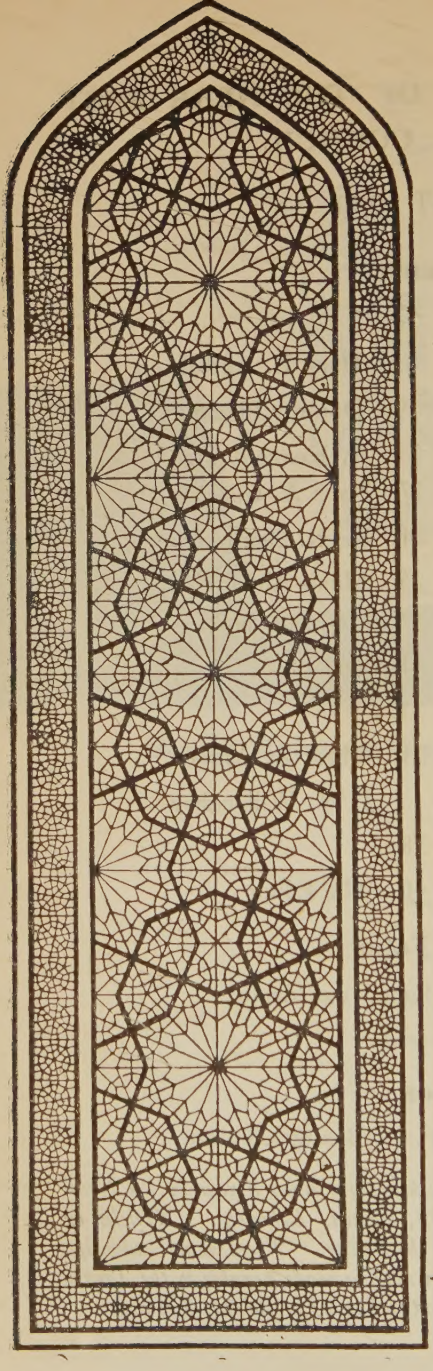
Advent 1959



"Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad before the Lord; for He cometh, He cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth."

...He cometh. Will He behold the sad state of our disunity, the divisions of His Church?

...He cometh. Will He behold our indifference and inaction on the social issues of our day — broken homes and broken children, lost and homeless refugees, the idolatry of our materialism?

...He cometh. Will He behold our lack of prayer — for the peace of His world, for those who have strayed from Him, for obedience in daily action?

...He cometh. Will He behold our frequent words and our infrequent acts, our theological statements and our uncharitable deeds?

"Lift up your heads, o ye gates!
Even lift them up,
ye everlasting doors,
And the King of Glory shall come in."

* * *

Behold,
your King!

← **Line drawing of a window in the Shiraz Church.**

"Are you attempting to convert the Muslims?" The travelling salesman looked as though he were going to add something, but hesitated. Perhaps my counter-question was fired a little too fast: "What do you mean by 'conversion'?" His embarrassment made my mistake quite obvious. I never found out what he was going to say...

Yet, I may guess. All sorts of people ask this question, and their comments show what they think. The objection often is made that we should not attempt to 'convert' the Muslims. We should not interfere with their religion. They are monotheists just like Jews and Christians. Why not rather seek to develop a closer cooperation between Christians and Muslims? Why not share what we have in common? Many of our visitors express their commendations for our 'social work,' with the obvious idea that service is better than 'religious pressure.'

(mission is meeting)

Should we, or should we not, attempt to convert the Muslims? The following is no attempt at answering the question. For a study on a much wider basis than is possible here would be necessary. Nevertheless repeatedly faced with the concrete question, more or less popularly formulated, it becomes a matter of personal concern, a question of existential importance, rather than a theoretical problem to be solved theologically. – So, the following is the meditation of one who seeks his bearings from the light of Him who came "into the world" to let His light shine upon all people.

"Thou art Simon, the son of Jona..."

Christ was "sent into the world." This has no doubt a cosmic and general significance. But of more immediate im-

portance is that He came into existence, into the world of existing, living men, not man in general or in the abstract. He came into the little world of the fishermen in Galilee. This little world of ordinary, working men seemed of no significance to empires and kingdoms, or to the general course of history. Who cared what happened at Nazareth, or Capernaum, or the Lake of Galilee? What event of historical determination could be expected out of Bethlehem — or even Jerusalem? Yet, into this world he came, the world of Andrew, and Simon, and John...

When He met them He did not lift them into a context of distant and abstract significance. He confirmed them in their own being, as the men living in Galilee, as the men who were known for being Galilaeans. His relationships with them were immediate; He was present in their presence. "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona... Thou art the fisherman on the Lake of Galilee..." Whether proud or ashamed Simon could not escape being Simon the son of Jona. This name bore in it all his relationships with past and present, with family and friends, with work and worship. It enclosed his whole world of concepts and meanings. "Now, as I stand before thee, thou art Simon, son of Jona."

Whatever I am trying to do as a missionary, my vocation is to meet people on this level. I was sent into a world of living, existing people. They are Muslims. Their world is Islam, or the part of it in which they live. Certainly, they have much in common with people in all parts of the world, but they are not people in general. Nor does this Muslim man conceal within him what I might be tempted to think of as his "true being," or "true man." For it is precisely as a Muslim that he is the man I ought to meet. His culture and concepts belong to his local setting; his relationships are with other Muslims. Lest I place myself in a false position before him, I must meet him where he is. Now, as I meet him, he is Muslim.

Speaking in a different context, Kierkegaard, writing on

teaching, says that helping another man first of all means to understand what he understands. Helping him may even mean my willingness to accept being considered in the wrong, admitting my failure to realize what the other man understands; and therefore accepting from him help to understand what he understands. Humiliating as this may be, how can I truly teach if I am unwilling to learn from the learner what he does not know? How can I engage in true conversation if I am unwilling to understand the other man's terms?

So, I must meet the Muslim, "accept and confirm him in his own being," as Martin Buber might put it. But that my presence in his presence would be the presence of Christ! For the presence of the Church among Muslims ought to mean the presence of the Christ. Our concern is that Muslims should meet Him, and the Church is the locus for such encounters.

"Thou shalt be called Cephas..."

Christ, present in Simon's life, did not only confirm him in his personal being, but also placed him before a new destiny. "In all your familiar relationships, you are Simon, the son of Jona. You are the fisherman on the Lake of Galilee, like your fathers before you. You are a Jew. But 'thou shalt be called Cephas,' and I will make you a fisher of men. You will know and enter into new relationships, and your horizon will be the ends of the world."

Of course, all this was not poured out in one big breath, and Simon, no doubt, was perplexed at such perspectives. But Peter very slowly caught the great vision.

Living with the Christ, in daily contact with Him, following Him, Simon came to a marvelous conviction: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Would the following paraphrasing be out of place? "In Thy presence we are in the presence of God, the Living God. As Thou hast come into our presence, so we have come into the presence of God." It was Simon, son of Jona, who came to this faith. "Blessed art thou, Simon barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." The destiny of Peter was based on the faith of Simon. What Peter the Apostle proclaimed is what was given to Simon the fisherman. For what he was, and what he became, were inseparably one and the same man.

So it was with the men of Christ's company. Jews they were, steeped in Jewish culture and concepts. As Jews they met the Christ in whom their culture and concepts were filled with new meanings. And when they came to believe in Him as the presence of God in existence, they were still Jews. They were never taken out of their cultural context in order to believe in the Christ, but in Him they found a new destiny transcending their narrower context... So it was with the Gentiles who came to believe in Him. The Church did not expect them to become Jews in order to believe. They became followers of Christ, and, therefore, later, were called Christians.

Today this glorious name is loaded with connotations that are not always to the glory of God. So much is this true that the "true believers" in a number of Christian countries have found it necessary to distinguish between mere status and true faith. If this be so among Christians, how can we expect that outsiders should be able to associate with the term "Christian", as commonly known and used, a living and vital communion with God in Christ? How humiliating it is that my presence among Muslims too often merely reflects traditional western Christianity, rather than a radiant transparency to Christ Himself!

For it is in Christ Himself that the Muslim must meet the New Being. God encounters the Muslim in Christ, just as He meets the Jew and the Christian. His intention for him is reconciliation and hope, a new destiny in a world of despair and death. If, however, the Muslim refuses to identify himself with Christians, as he has come to know them through history and in the present day drama, is it not part of the Church's obedience to seek new ways in which to bring about more meaningful encounters on deeper levels, even at the cost of cherished traditions?

"Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou me?..."

Despite his loud declarations of loyalty, Peter denied his new destiny in Christ. He denied his new relationships to the disciples, and he denied the Christ. What Christ? — the Christ of his own confession? — the Christ of his 'faith?' — Hardly. He denied, at the existential moment, Him who stood before the high priest, the One who was about to be crucified. *In extremis* he denied the Christ of the Cross. But, strange as it may sound, Peter's denial was logical. For his theory was that such a thing ought not, could not, would not happen to God's Christ. Indeed, he defended this theory, sword in hand. Then he denied himself out of the fellowship of friends and master. How lonely was the loneliness of Simon as the cock crew!

What difference is there between Peter's denial of the Crucified and Islam's? As Canon Kenneth Cragg describes Islam's denial of Christ's crucifixion, is there not a certain similarity with Peter's attitude? Is not the theory the same?— But Peter was allowed to meet his Lord again, to be placed before the crucial question: "Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou me?" This is the question of a new relation that gives meaning to all other relations. Should not Muslims have the opportunity to be faced with the same question, and offer the answer of response?

The question placed before Islam as such has no meaning. For Islam is impersonal, a system of doctrines, laws and institutions. But the Muslims are existing people, capable of response to Love's question about love.

Here I am at the very heart of my presence among Muslims. At this point the question: *"What think ye of Christ ?"* has become : *"Lovest thou me ?"* But this concerns me as much as it concerns the Muslim, and the Muslim as much as it concerns me. For, at the existential moment, at the moment of Christ's crucifixion, we both denied Him. We denied Him in the injustice to millions of human beings. We denied Him in the suffering we caused by our partaking in the evil of our day. We denied Him in denying one another, as we built walls within which we ignored the world around us.

What is our response to Love? The Muslim's? Mine? This is far more important than status or statistics. If the two of us respond to Christ with love, then we shall also truly meet in the same response.

If this is 'conversion,' then, "yes, I am attempting to convert the Muslim to Christ..."

RECENT ARABIC BOOKS

Abraham in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, by Maitre Habib Said. This is a modern analysis of Abraham's journey from Ur to Palestine, a fascinating short account of his life and its influence, as depicted in the Old Testament and the Qur'an.

Simon Peter, published by the Literacy Campaign Group. This is a short biography of the Apostle, printed in large type, especially for the newly literate.

Prophets and Prophecy, by Ibrahim Matar, and published by the Literature Committee in Beirut. This book deals with the prophets and inspiration. The author begins with magic and sorcery, but culminates with Christ, the perfection of all prophecy.

DOROTHY BLATTER

across the Golden Horn

The Story of Literature in Turkey

Those of you who have not visited Turkey recently may not be fully aware of the great progress which is being made here. In 1928, when the Arabic script was replaced by the Latin letters and a completely phonetic alphabet was introduced, there was a sudden upsurge in the literacy rate. Everyone was supposed to learn to read. And thousands did. Thousands more learned to read and write at least their names, and received a certificate stating that they could do so. But, alas, at that time there was very little for the new literate to practice on, and he soon forgot what he had learned.

Schools and Primers

But now, on a sounder foundation, efforts are again being made

to bring the opportunity to read and write within the reach of every person in the country. The primary schools are so crowded that in some of them there are four sessions. This means that each child, in such a school, has about twelve hours of schooling a week, with enough homework so that with hard study he is able to cover the material for the year.

The Mechanics of Reading

Fortunately the average child can learn to read very quickly, because, once he has mastered the sounds of the twenty-nine letters, he can sound out anything he sees. One is touched to see the intensity with which the beginners pore over their primers and first-grade readers. Then comes frustration, because there are so few supplementary readers for their age and reading level. So they read and re-read their dog-eared school books when they should be reaching out, gaining both reading skill and knowledge from new books.

And Adults Read

The civilian adult education courses which are springing up here and there throughout the country are sure evidence that the adults who had no opportunity for an education in their youth, are now eager to catch up. One Primary School principal in a very poor district in Istanbul has on his own initiative opened evening classes for the men, and after-school classes for the women of that neighborhood. This project is now growing into a community affair with cultural subjects as well as lessons in reading and writing. But once more there arises the problem of finding adult books written in simple Turkish, to give them practice in this newly acquired skill.

What Will They Read?

This year the government is launching a widespread program with the aim of 100% literacy in the army. Books have been specially prepared, and thousands of these young peasants who have had no opportunity to learn to read are now being given intensive lessons by trained teachers. The hope is, that when they go back to their villages, many of which have no schools as yet, these young men will pass on to their less fortunate neighbours the joy of the printed page. The big problem is "What are they going to read?"

Opportunity — and Responsibility

But, you may ask, what is our Christian responsibility in this program? What can we do, and what are we doing to meet the need of the enquiring mind, and the eager learner? Why does the Mission maintain a Publication Department here?

At our Board of Managers' meeting last February, we decided to concentrate on seven areas in

our publications, seven categories of people whom we should reach.

The Enquiring Muslim

The first is that group of Muslims who are interested in knowing more about Christian ideas and ideals as a part of western culture. Islam is the religion of Turkey, but there are many people who are liberal in their thinking and wish to know more about the other religions, and especially about Christianity since Christian thought is so much a part of western culture today, and Turkey is increasingly western in her thinking.

The Seeking Parent

The second group consists of the parents who are conscious of the need for help in the character training of their children. To these parents we would seek to bring the best thinking of the child specialists and the directors of religious education, as well as books on family life and community cooperation.

The New Literate

A third group has been mentioned above, the new literate. In this field the need is for books in very simple Turkish, books which will meet some need in village life, whether it be along lines of health or higher thinking. These books must necessarily be very cheap for money is scarce in the villages, and even scarcer is the idea that money should be paid out for books.

Fourth — Books For Children

The need for more and better children's books is constantly with us. With the comics invading the land and with the thousands of children who are learning to read each year, it is imperative that we place within the reach of their hands (and their pocketbooks) good literature, books with high ideals and intellectual worth, that they may not be forced to accept

Great Ideas Make Great Men

the worthless things that are so plentiful. Each book should be chosen for the character training it provides, and the physical character of the book should help develop the child's taste.

Fifth — For Stateside Use

We also have a responsibility to the people in America, and one group of people we must reach are those in the States who need literature to stimulate their interest

in the Near East, and their understanding of the problems of the Muslim lands.

Sixth — The Mission

It goes without saying that we also have a responsibility toward our mission organizations, and part of our task is to provide any special textbooks or pamphlets the mission schools or clinics may need.

And To The Church

Finally we have a responsibility to the small groups of Christians in Turkey. One of our problems in this respect is that we are not equipped to publish material in any language except Turkish, and any language except Turkish, and some groups wish to have their religious literature in other languages. However, Christian books do sell, although not widely, among the protestant churches, and we are constantly adding to our titles in order that there may be a body of Christian literature for these groups to draw upon. A devotional book which we hope will be of service to both Christians and Muslims is now being prepared.

Distribution

Distribution is mainly through the public bookshops and our books go out in a steady stream through 168 commercial bookstores in 46 towns and cities of the country. Each book carries the trade-mark of the department with the slogan, *"Great Ideas Make Great Men."*

To Create Is To Build

Of course there are constant problems in the mechanics of getting a book printed. Paper shortages, lack of proper ink and of metal for type all cause endless frustrations. Printing costs have approximately doubled in the last seven months, but the selling price of books (especially children's books) has not risen in proportion, which means that much must be subsidized. It is a constant struggle to keep the quality up and the price down. But it is worth it! To feel that through the printed page one is having even a small share in the forming of the attitudes and ideals which will determine the future of this awakening land is indeed a great satisfaction.

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* * * *

The Rev. Yusef Abdul Nur of the Coptic Evangelical Church has been asked to serve as pastor and minister-in-charge of the Church of Christ in Kuwait. The Church is composed of associate members of all of the major churches of the Near East, who are residing or working in Kuwait.

A. KENNETH
CRAGG

"And to the Angel of the Church at"

It is an intriguing and puzzling phrase, coming repeatedly in the address of the Letters to the Seven Churches in the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation. The many conjectures as to its meaning lie with you and with the commentators. Some of them are ingenious, others erudite. Why does the writer not content himself, as St. Paul or St. Peter do, with "to the Ephesians" simply, or "to the saints at Philippi" ('with the bishops and deacons' — the designation not necessarily mutually exclusive), or "to the strangers scattered abroad in.."? Why "the angel of the Church at..."?

Is the phrase a reference to some. corporate personality? or a guardian spirit? or is it the Church itself in symbolic sense? An angel as we know is essentially a messenger, and a messenger, preposition-wise, may be both "to" and "from." Being unable here to distinguish, it is right to take both.

Then "the angel of the Church" is its capacity to hear the Divine voice and its capacity to go on the Divine errands. It means, then. perhaps. the apprehension of the Church Godward and its expression manward, its vocation to know and to show, its aptness to learn and so to teach. In that case, all that the Spirit had to say to the Churches would depend upon this ability to receive heavenly intimations and to make them, to hear the Word of God and to make the Word of God heard.

Is it not utterly evident that these two go together? As the poet says:

"Angels from the face of God
Stand hidden in their wings"

and they remain unrecognized. Then with loss of sensitivity to the Gospel goes a loss of capacity to express it ourselves. Or, put-

ting it in other words, every qualification for serving the Christian faith stands in the readiness to be ourselves open to it utterly. And thus in turn, all communicative study of other faiths must take us into a sharpened apprehension of our own. Learning Christ goes all the time with telling Him. The angel of the Church is its being inwardly evangelized by its own evangel, its taking to itself what it exists to take to others.

And in Jerusalem

These reflections are appropriate to what we are about in the Study Program in Islam and bear very much on the recent Summer School in Jerusalem. These paragraphs are not primarily a report. Suffice it to say that some 65 people came into residence and that they were swelled for some lectures by upwards of 30 Jerusalemites; that we had representatives from India and Pakistan and Nigeria, as well as the N.E.C.C. area; that there was a varied miscellany of popular lectures; that Professor Daud Rahbar repeated his visit of 1958 to our great profit and gratitude; that Professor Burton Thurston led us in a blessed series on keywords of the New Testament; that equally essential Islamic terms and meanings were examined, and that we renewed the customary devotional walks from Bethany to the Mount of Olives, and from the Syrian Church of St. Mark to Gethsemane.

The Fellowship

All that does not exhaust the tale of the Summer School, and only deals with its externals. We must record our warm thanks to all who contributed to our hospitality, and to every aspect of our organization, as well as many far afield who sustained us by their fellowship and their gifts.

What Manner of Meeting

The overall title of the Summer School was the phrase from St. Luke 24: *"What manner of communications are these?"* In what quality of expression are we related to men and creeds around us? What is the temper of our communication? How abreast are we of the thoughts men think and the things they instinctively assume? How far is what we say calculated to meet them where they are, culturally, psychologically, mentally, emotionally? All these are familiar questions behind the theology of the Study Program as a whole.

And To Each Other

But they all concern "the angel of the Church" understood as meaning its expressive self. Perhaps in the Emmaus context what we should most have in mind is the disciples' own understanding of the events they had just lived through. Was Jesus asking them this question of communication in an inward sense? What were they

thinking of His Cross? What was it they were saying *to each other* about the upshot of those tremendous hours? How were they "reading,' how were they taking, the events of Good Friday and Easter?

The answer came soon enough in the way they replied to the Stranger. Their "communications" about the Master were all out of focus. They had not really seen their "angel", nor met their interpreter, until Jesus Himself became one — *the* one — to them. It was in His own self-interpreting presence that they understood Himself.

Who is He?

So our concern throughout must be with a growing capacity to receive from Christ and this will be the condition of others receiving Him through us. All our study of communication must be a constant opening of ourselves to what He says in being Who He is.

Can we not imagine Him drawing near to the contemporary Church (not least that part of it amid Islam) and putting to His disciples questions about their apprehension of His Cross? Do we know Him, in the words of old Horace Bushnell, as Author of a "mighty salvation because it is a tragic salvation," Whose Cross is "the suffering symbol in the flesh of God's suffering love in the Spirit" in the place where God is meeting us by a Divine art that sanctifies both forgiveness and justice. He had come for just such a work of love and "He simply took the liabilities of a human Person doing such a work." "His rejection revealed the heart of His rejectors" but it also manifested and fulfilled the redeeming travail of God.

To Learn Is To Tell

May it not be, then, that our biggest problem in communication is our own dullness of apprehension? May this not be the reason why Revelation's Letters are addressed to "the angel of the Church," that what God wants to get at is our capacity to understand? We shall be able to evangelize when we are evangelized.

Let us then seek all occasions of meeting other men as requiring ever new encounter with Christ and let us hold together in the Study Program of the Near East Christian Council.

What Of Its Future?

After three years of scattered institutes, three Summer Schools, twenty Study Papers (*Operation Reach*), much wandering (of the physical sort) by almost a hundred flights, two voyages and plenty of buses, it will not for the near future be quite so peripatetic. It is hoped that the Study Papers will continue and that a new series planned for Muslims will begin.

Meanwhile, for family reasons, these activities will be pursued from Canterbury, England, where the writer has joined the staff of the Central Anglican College. Until some other provision is made, he hopes, in vacations and at other times, to make fairly frequent, but not long extended, visits to the Near East, as opportunity may offer or invitations may suggest.

It is hoped that there may be Summer Schools in 1960 in Iran and/or Egypt as well as, or instead of, Jerusalem. The Committee on the Study Program, chaired by Archbishop MacInnes in Jerusalem, is considering these questions. Comments and proposals about any aspect of our common duty will be always welcome.

SOME RECENT ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS IN ARABIC

Psychology in the Service of the Service of the Spirit, published by the Fellowship of Christian Writers in the Near East. This book is written by one of the eminent Christian lawyers in Egypt, and it is a new venture to draw to our group some of the secular writers who are interested in Christian literature. The author, Maitre Abadir Hakim, contributed 40% of the cost of its production. In this book, he portrays the high ideals in the individual, national and international life from a Christian point of view, quoting Christ's sayings and deeds as his evidence. He also quotes from the Qur'an and Muslim traditions.

The Ten Commandments in the Modern Age, by Maitre Habib Said. It has been felt that the Ten Commandments were being crowded out from Christian worship and given scanty attention in Christian thought and teaching. The author tries to recapture the interest of the Arab world in these commandments by applying them to the problems and behaviour of modern life in the area.

Interviews, by the Rev. Labib Mishriky, D.D. A book of interest to the general public. The author imagines himself a newspaper correspondent who interviews many of the great characters of the Bible, asking their views on many vital points. Their answers serve to bring out the living message of the Bible.

NAJIB A. CUBA'IN

To Endure a Cross

...the Bishop in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon for the Evangelical Episcopal Community writes here of the work that has been done amongst Palestinian Arab refugees, and speaks of the cross which must be endured by the Church for the work that has been left undone.

Much has been said and written about the Palestine Arab refugees and their tragic situation. The Christian Church all over the world has taken deep interest in this refugee situation and their contributions in cash and kind have been and are still tremendous.

The Near East Christian Council Committee for Refugee Work has set up area committees wherever there are Arab Palestine refugees, to care for their needs, not only in clothing and food, but also in their spiritual and moral life. The United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine refugees is also doing a fine job in looking after the refugees. Many other bodies and individuals, such as the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Mission, take special interest in this matter and extend substantial help to meet their needs.

In spite of the great efforts being made through the churches, governments and private institutions, the refugee situation is still tense. No sign of a solution is yet seen. I believe that these refugees expect something more than food and clothing. They feel that a great injustice has been done to them and that the Christian Church and the nations of the

world are not making a sufficient effort to correct the wrong which was done. This fact drives them to a state of despair, not only with regard to their specific situation, but more so with regard to the indifference and inaction of the civilized world against wrong.

Many Christian conferences feel concerned about this situation and express deep sympathy with the refugees, but they are not brave enough to stand by the side of truth and endeavour to provoke effective governmental action.

The Church today feels a deep concern in regard to the progress of communism. We know that refugee situations, such as those created under the conditions of the Palestine Arab refugee, may be a fruitful soil for communism. Therefore the worldwide Christian Church should help Jordan and other Arab states where refugees live in great numbers to uproot the seeds of communism that may be sown amongst refugees. In my opinion, the Christian Church can be a great factor in that respect by saying the truth fearlessly and doing what is right, bravely.

The Palestine Arab refugees are, in spite of all their hardships, intelligent people. While they are grateful for what the Christian Church and the Christian nations are doing for them, they quote the words of our Lord: *"Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that cometh forth from the mouth of God."* Saying the truth and doing it may be a very expensive job. However, our Lord gave His life for the truth, regardless of the expense.

The refugees today care for these spiritual and moral issues, and actually it is these issues that matter. Political ambitions and national aspirations may overlook such issues, but if we want to build up human character and the future generations, our thinking must soar higher than thoughts of selfishness and gro[illegible]

"Refugees care for spiritual and moral issues..."

The International Missionary Council, the World Council of Churches and other world organizations plan that this year should be a world refugee year. Many consultations will be made to close down refugee camps in Europe. We hope that held to consider world refugee situations. An effort may be something permanent can be done for refugees in Europe to help them to settle down and begin a normal life again.

But we must remember that the situation of the Palestine Arab refugees is a unique one. Even if in 1960 or in later years the camps of Palestine Arab refugees are closed down, this will not mean that the Arab refugee problem has been solved.

New arrangements of relief and rehabilitation may relieve the conditions of the Palestine Arab refugee, but they will not in any way solve the problem. It is not an economic problem, but basically a political one. Unless a just political solution is found, the problem will remain alive. That is why this situation is the concern of the Christian Church as well as the concern of the United Nations.

In solving problems, our Lord dealt with the basic reasons

that caused them. He always went deep into the roots of things. It is therefore the duty of His Catholic Church to deal with world situations of today in the same way. It is the ideology, the spiritual and moral standards in the life of people that should count. To feed the stomach and protect the body are certainly necessary to preserve life and overcome hardship. To fight the evils on which hardship feeds is a more important goal towards which the Church should march.

In spite of famine, poverty, starvation, selfishness and persecution in the life of the world of today, it is nevertheless a world of ideals. Unless, and until, the peoples of the world are given the right ideals to live for, this world will remain a place where problems and wrong survive and flourish. It is the duty of the Christian Church to spread the spiritual standards and the "good news" which our Lord came to this world to give.

I do not see how otherwise we can win the world to Christ. I believe that when the Church takes the right stand, says the right thing, and encourages people to do the right thing, it will preach Christianity effectively. Perhaps it may accomplish more in this way than through other means.

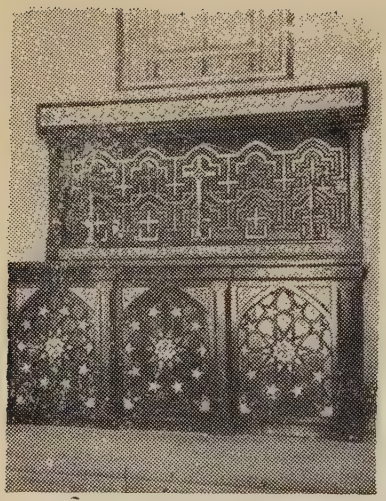
The Palestine Arab refugees look to the Christian Church to work in that direction with the vision to correct the wrong prevailing in the world today, as the Church endeavours to walk in the steps of the Master to change men's lives.

Visiting refugee camps and talking with many individuals, we find that they are interested in ideas and ideals just as much, or perhaps more, than their interest in relief. I am convinced that the many good gifts of the Christian Church for refugees all over the world are the resultant fruit of Christian sympathy and faith. Nevertheless, our task is to go still deeper in our love and charity to meet the problems at their basic level,

"looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross..."

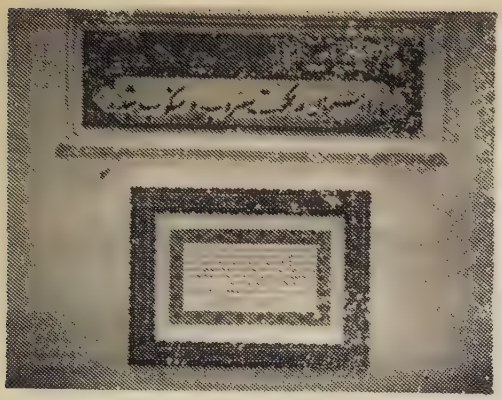
The Church of St. Simon The Zealot in Shiraz, Iran

An interior view of part of the Chancel, showing the Pulpit, Altar, and coloured windows of very intricate design.



The main Altar. The reredos, or panel behind the altar, contains an ancient design in white and turquoise tiles, showing the sign of the Cross within a series of Persian arches, symbolizing Christianity in Iran. The words over the altar are the concluding part of the "Gloria in Excelsis."

An external view of part of the Church.



Inscription in Pahlavi, followed by a rendering into modern Persian, describing the first persecution of Christians in Persia about the year 290 A.D., on the part of Kartir Magupat, the chief of the Magi. In the Baptistry of the Church.

An interior view, looking down the nave, showing some of the Persian arches, and the groined roofs, bearing designs in coloured tiles.

Inscription in Chinese, followed by rendering into modern Persian, of the nine characters of the heading of the famous Christian tablet, set up at Sianfu in Western China in 781 A.D. by Persian Christians. In the Baptistry.

The Main Entrance to the Church.

R. N. SHARP

Built to the Glory of God

The Church of St. Simon the Zealot in Shiraz, Iran has been described as 'the most beautiful church in the entire Near East." Truly, it combines indigenous architectural principles and Christian devotion in a breathless beauty. The center fold illustrations attempt to convey this, but, unfortunately, the splendor of colour is lacking. Norman Sharp, the servant of God who has been privileged to use his talents in this field, gives us this detailed view

The Church of God, although supernational, has close national affinities, and is indigenous in every land.

Almost inevitably and most appropriately those buildings in which the worship of God takes place conform to a national style, and contain some of the architectural and cultural treasures of the country in which they are situated.

Perhaps in primitive parts of Africa it may be contended that no notable style of building prevails, and consequently a suitable design may be brought in from outside. But in regard to Iran, the reverse is the case, and a very definite and impressive style of building is observable throughout the country, only in the last two or three decades giving place to modern designs borrowed from abroad, which are on the whole less beautiful and out of accord with the traditional and climatic conditions of the country.

The Persian Arch

One of the most singular features of Persian architecture is the ten-centred arch, comprising on either side five arcs of varying incidence blended together. This very beautiful arch is to be seen in all types of buildings — mosques, colleges, bazaars, palaces, private dwellings, bridges, forts and *caravansarais,* and, through the spread of Persian influence, examples of the same arch are to be seen in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkistan, India and other adjacent countries.

This arch has been faithfully followed in the construction of the Church of Saint Simon the Zealot in Shiraz, and in some other churches in the Diocese of Iran, notably, Saint Andrew's Church, Kerman; the Church of the Light

of the Holy Spirit in Teheran; the Church of the Transfiguration in Qalat and the Church of the Epiphany in Bushire.

The picture of the nave of the Shiraz Church shows the series of arches that support the groined and many-domed roof, each of them in their turn displaying that varied curve which has become traditional and unexceptional in Iran. It would be out of place to use the Gothic two-centred arch or any other arch in a country, which centuries ago gave birth to an arch of a wholly distinctive shape and proportion.

In Hoc Signo

The *reredos,* or panel behind the main altar, of the Shiraz Church also contains a number of small Persian arches in coloured tile in each of which is placed a cross in contrasting colour. This was taken from an ancient building in Qazvin, and to the builder was no doubt merely a convenient pattern for decorating a wall, displaying a row of small Persian arches associated together. But since it incorporates the sign of the Cross, so the design, many times repeated of the Cross within the Persian Arch, fitly symbolizes for us Christianity in Iran, to which every church in this country is a standing witness.

Windows of Stars

More striking perhaps than the structural appearance of the Shiraz Church are the stained glass windows, of which there are in all 27, everyone a master-piece of Persian skill and craftsmanship. Windows of this unique type, constructed usually of the wood of the plane tree, which is not greatly affected by climatic variations, have been made for many hundreds of years in Iran, and examples are still to be seen in the mosques and other buildings, and in the miniature paintings of the sixteenth century.

These windows were made with extreme accuracy on the basis of the six-point, eight-point, ten-point, twelve-point or sixteen-point star, the lines of which, when extended, form a variety of inter-related geometrical figures, very pleasing to the eye. At first large frames containing these designs in open grills were made to serve as ornamental screens and trellised windows, but later the spaces were filled with coloured glass locally hand-made, the main hues being old gold, pale blue, sea-green and wine.

Later still, when coloured glass could be obtained more cheaply from abroad, the local manufacture of glass panes was discontinued, and a wider range and stronger tones of colour were employed. Examples of both types of stained glass window are to be seen in the Shiraz Church, the former being about 200 years old, and he latter 100.

Mode of Assembly

The intricate pattern of these windows was so accurately fitted together with minute sections of wood, tongued and grooved, and cut to the correct angle, that not only the geometrical designs were faithfully followed, but, though no adhesive was used, they remain as firm and secure as when first put together.

In Palestine and Egypt it has been the custom to prepare stained-glass windows by embedding the glass in a plaster of gypsum, as may be seen today in the Mosque of 'Omar in Jerusalem, or the Church of the Light of the World in Cairo, but far more skill is required when the window consists of a multitude of small pieces of wood cut at varying angles and fitted together.

In Memoriam

The Shiraz Church contains a memorial to Henry Martyn, who came from India in 1811, and in less than a year translated in Shiraz the entire New Testament from the original Greek into Persian and also the Book of Psalms. Original editions of these books are preserved in a case beneath his portrait. It is fitting that he should be remembered in the church later built in the city where he accomplished his great task in so short a time.

The Church Bell also bears his name, being an offering in memory of him from Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge, where Henry Martyn formerly served.

Two other memorials are to be seen in the Shiraz Church. One is a copy of an inscription in Pahlavi dating from the third century describing the first persecution of Christians in Persia, which was carried out by order of the then chief of the Magi, Kartir Magupat, who held the position of Chief Vazir under five successive Persian Monarchs.

The other memorial is a reproduction of part of the famous Christian Tablet set up by Persian Christians in Western China in the year 781 A.D., testifying to the spread of the Christian Faith in that country from the year 635 onwards through the activity of Persian clergy.

With the Help of God

One unique feature of the Shiraz Church is a tablet in cuneiform bearing the words of Xerxes, son of Darius the Great, about the magnificent palace he reared at Persepolis 35 miles north of Shiraz. "Whatever seems beautiful, we did it all with the help of God." The original of this is inscribed four times on the polished stone walls of the Propylaea at Persepolis, and, though describing a royal palace built more than four hundred years before Christ, applies fittingly to the Shiraz Church, where whatever there may be of beauty is surely God-inspired.

The Shiraz Church and many other churches in Iran display at some prominent part of the building the eightpointed star in coloured faience shown on the cover of this number. This design was taken from the Gohar Shad Mosque in Mashhad, and adapted to Christian use. It contains the great name of Jesus Christ and eight of His titles or attributes.

It does not fall to many to build a church, and it generally happens that a congregation worships in a building put up by others in past years or centuries, the type of which cannot be modified or improved. But when the opportunity of building a church occurs, it would seem it should be borne in mind that a church building is essentially for the glory of God, as well as for the convenience of His people.

Accordingly there should be something about a church suggestive of the greatness of God and the honour of His worship. Noble proportions, soaring arches and windows of tracery and colour in an indigenous style may help to convey thoughts of this kind, and lead the human spirit towards the threshold of the "Temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

* * * *

***The Jubilee Year celebrations of St. Luke's Church, Isfahan, Iran, were held the week of October 12-17, with the Rev. W. M. Miller of Teheran as special speaker.

***Considerable debate and discussion has been aroused over the plan to unite the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council into a single world body. At the time of the Central Committee meeting of the W.C.C. in August, forty-four of the 173 member churches of the W.C.C. had indicated support. At the same time, a little over half of the 38 National Christian Councils responded favourably.

Two churches voted in opposition to the plan, and four Christian Councils were also recorded as opposed. Eastern Orthodox churches hesitate because the I.M.C. includes members which "are not churches and integration might mean that the W.C.C.'S missionary witness would be a non-church witness."

Final action on the scheme will be voted in late 1961 by the W.C.C.'s Third Assembly and the I.M.C. Two-thirds majority endorsement by members of both bodies is necessary before adoption.

——E.P.S. (Geneva)

MENIS ABDUL NOOR

WHERE EGYPT'S YOUTH MEET CHRIST

In Bait as Salam Camp, thirty kilometers west of Alexandria, six hundred young people meet every year. On the Mediterranean beach they know Christ as a personal Saviour, deepen their spiritual lives and have Christian fellowship.

"This is my first time to attend a religious conference," said Naim Souss. "I did not come to hear religious talks, but I came for fun. The idea of spending a week on the beach for a cheap price drew me to your youth camp. When I first arrived at Bait as Salam, I felt sorry to be among people who did not share the same ideas with me about life. Yet I saw the joy, peace and happiness in their lives which seemed real and deep. Their joy came from a completely different source than mine."

The faces followed the speaker and the ears of all those attending the testimony meeting listened with interest as Naim went on.

"One day Sameer, my roommate, started telling me that the forgiveness of my sins through the blood of Christ would bring me the joy I desire and the peace I look for. When I brought up the fact that I had almost committed every sin, even murdering, Sameer assured me that Christ will accept me as I am, and will wash all my sins away. On our knees, we knelt in the sand, and I committed my life to Christ. He filled me with joy and peace."

As the sixty young people who attended the conference listened to Naim's testimony, they could feel the Holy Spirit moving to work among them.

Naim's talk moved a medical doctor to stand and relate what the conference meant to him. Ramases said, "When I was in my

last year in college, I was too busy studying lessons, preparing for graduation exams. This kept me from attending religious meetings, and from Christian fellowship.

"I thought that after graduation, I would be able to resume my religious activities. But then I was appointed to a hospital in Cairo, and I had to steal time to hide and pray or read my Bible.

Ramases continued, "In this conference, I heard about consecration to Christ. I heard that I should submit all the keys of my life to Him. This talk moved my heart, and I decided to consecrate my life to my Lord completely. Please pray for me that I can continue in my vow."

For two hours, the young people stood up to tell what new experiences they had achieved during their one week of stay in Bait as Salam.

Bait as Salam was built by the young people of the Coptic Evangelical Church, with the kind help of the young people of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

In the summer of 1954, the Church bought eleven acres of land by the Mediterranean Sea, thirty kilometers west of Alexandria. Young people started the building with their own hands. They completed the work in the summer of 1955.

Since 1956 the camp has been used by different church groups. It can accomodate 100 persons. Each week Bait as Salam says farewell to one group to welcome another. Youth leaders, women's groups, young people, ministers, and Writers' Fellowship have all found time there to meet with God and to deepen their spiritual lives and receive new insights into their work for Christ in the future.

There is a great need for trained leadership in youth groups. Bait as Salam was host to a conference in August 1959, at which time study was carried on of programs for youth meetings in Egypt. There is a hope that Bait as Salam will welcome youth leaders from all Arabic speaking countries to discuss plans together. This is planned for the summer of 1960.

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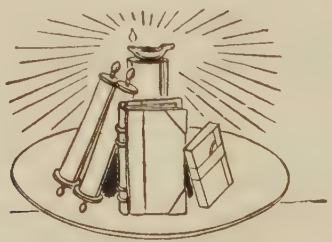

DON MAC NEILL

BEGINNING AT MUSCAT

The Muscat Church Conference was held in April of 1959, and although representatives of three churches only were there, it marked one of the first gatherings of the Christians of the Gulf to discuss matters pertaining to the life of the Church. All too little is known of the Church in the Gulf. Your interest and prayers are requested.

It is the year 1889. In the third floor recesses of New Brunswick Theological Seminary, an idea has been born, a new child has emerged, the Arabian Mission, whose aim is "the occupation of the interior of Arabia for Christ." With the fervour of those who break through the barrier of wilderness, pioneers of a new land, a new force has been commissioned to preach the Gospel to the sons of Ishmael. This new force is soon to sweep up the Persian Gulf area, beginning at Muscat, to occupy for Christ's sake the land, and to penetrate with His Mind into the thinking and customs of Muslim Arabs.

Christians of the Gulf Meet...

Some seventy years pass. It is the year 1959, and another new force meets to possess for Christ the thought of the entire Gulf, beginning again at Muscat. It is a conference of the three Churches of Christ in the Arabian Gulf. The seventy years have been filled with disappointment and patience, with failure and triumph, lean years and fat ones. It has not been a

barren period. Names of great pioneers, indelibly etched in the history of mission, are to be found — Zwemer, Cantine, Barney, Harrison, Moerdyk, Calverley, Van-Peursem, Dykstra, Pennings, and DeJong. Now the fruits of the seed sown by these early pioneers, having been toiled over by zealous gardeners of the faith, are almost ready for harvest. This harvest is not in terms of numerical force, but in terms of responsible, intelligent development of church leadership.

Where Bishop French Lies

It is significant that in Muscat this first evidence finds reality. For here in a tiny cove off the mighty Gulf is a small cemetery, where memorial is made of Bishop French, first bishop of Lahore.This Arab Church Conference of 1959 here finds its central theme—the dream of one who lived for it and who died for it in the backwaters of civilization on the rocky shores of Oman. A dream once dreamed is never invain. Even as the dreams of Joseph the prisoner turned into the reality of Joseph, the father of his people, even so the dreams of Bishop French are realized in the embryonic evidence of the Muscat conference.

Who are the Churches of the Gulf?

Before entering into the decisions of the conference, it is good to recall a bit of the background of the churches of the Gulf. The pioneers who first set their feet forward in this area worked through discouragement and depression. Although institutions, such as hospitals and schools, were welcomed and prospered, the fruits of the church were measured first only in influence, and then slowly in individuals, persuaded and filled by the living Spirit. Small groups or fellowships grew up in Bahrain, Kuwait and Muscat. These small groups, nurtured and guided, grew slowly yet surely. Discovery of oil in Bahrain and Kuwait made tremendous differences in the numerical additions of foreign Christians. In these places, Arab Christians were brought into the indigenous fellowship — Christians from varied backgrounds and traditions, yet one in Christ.

The Host Church

Muscat, on the other hand, was not blessed with the evidence of the black gold, yet carried on with greater blessing in faith under pressure. Repeated trials made faith come harder and grow stronger. First individuals, and later families, came to share in the fellowship. Pastoral guidance and care was first totally the responsibility of the missionary clergyman, and then later became the responsibility of the whole fellowship, as it met as a family of God to exercise discipline and to reassure in the faith. Gathered in simple *mejlis*, seated humbly cross-legged on floor mats, they shared in

prayer and discussion. The life of the church became their heart and soul. And out of this grew concern and thought — out of this grew the unquenchable desire for unity, for association with other Christian fellowships. In simple faith and encounter with the Lord of the Church, they stretched out to call others brothers, to bind them in love.

Mission and the Church

Out of these fellowships grew the Muscat Conference. It did not equal in numbers the power of other movements for church union. Vast numbers of Christians were not involved nor represented. For Muscat 1959 was not an exhibit of numerical strength; it was a triumph of zeal and faith. It was not even the first conference of its sort. Others had been held before, notably the Basrah Conference of 1954. But this represented the forward thinking of the three missionary churches of the Gulf — Kuwait, Bahrain and Muscat — and the inception of imaginative and constructive work towards the missionary task of all Arab Christians today.

One Church

First, the Christians present at this conference realized the ecumenical obligation of their calling. They were not there as representatives of a presbyterian group, or a reformed group or an Anglican group, but as members of the undivided Body of Christ. The Churches represented desired to be known as the Church of Christ, not by denominational or creedal titles. They felt the unity of the fellowship of His Body. Theologically and liturgically, questions here are unanswered. The way is not clear ahead. Problems of relationship with episcopal and orthodox groups, matters of life and work and liturgy remain to be wrestled with, but with the *naivité*

of faith, they stated that all our divisions and divisiveness is sin. To begin at this point takes courage born only of the Spirit of Him Who bore the Cross. They will have to bear the ridicule of churchmen whose minds are cluttered with the paraphernalia of religion. Yet they have begun with the Mind of Christ.

One World

Secondly, the conference expressed this desire for unity in spite of national boundaries. The prides

and prejudices of national beingness were overcome in the oneness of Christ. The creatures of the field and air know no boundary between one state and another. Even so must the human creature realize the oneness of his flesh and the oneness of his creation. Different lands, different backgrounds, do not make for different kinds of Christians. If He is One, His Creation is One.

With Christ at the Center

Thirdly, the conference expressed the necessity of order and leadership coming from "within" rather than from outside the group. This is the product of faith alone. It means far more than an absence of "mission control or support." The need for authority must stem from the heart of the group, not from directive outside force or tradition. The encounter with the Divine draws men into relationship with one another, but the power persuasive lies with the communication of the Divine to the fellowship. If faith is a matter of encounter, even so must the orders emerging from it speak of that initial encounter. This is not only true in matters of responsible leadership, but also in the life and order of the church. Theology in creedal statements cannot be passed on. It must be lived out in the life of the church. The point which the conference stressed was mainly the matter of leadership, but the further implications are also to be found.

In Life and Faith

One cannot hope to see the the result of any conference immediately. But the tone of Muscat 1959 is a vindication of what has happened in the Gulf churches. They have the courage of a faith that has been shaped upon the crucible of life and encounter. A Church has emerged with that faith as its lifeblood, with fellowship flowing through its veins, with communion as its life. True, the climax has yet to be reached. The last word has yet to be spoken. But a new *élan* has been added, and there are some that have come to that intersection, where Christ meets men and builds upon the rock of their faith His Church.

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PAUL BRÉS

Pentecost At El-Biar

***** Unfortunately, for us, little news has come in the past from Algeria, and so we are especially happy in hearing of this evidence of the cooperative work being carried on through the Council of Missions in Algeria. Pentecost was an "ingathering" and we pray that this modern "ingathering" of brotherhood and sharing will mean much in building of Christ's Church in Algeria,**

Whitsuntide, 1959

After a few weeks spent in Algeria in 1924, Dr. Samuel Zwemer wrote in one of his innumerable books that the missionary enterprise in that area needed, first of all, a more cooperative and coordinate spirit.

The situation in 1959 is not very different. The major part of the missionaries in Algeria belong to groups who desire to remain independent in all their activities. Thus there is no mission council, no council of churches in Algeria, and, as an area, does not technically belong to the Near East Christian Council.

However there is a body called the "Council of Missions," headed by M. A. Rolland, of Tizi-Ouzou, which is an administrative body whose objective is to help missionaries in administrative matters. It is concerned in keeping a fraternal link between all groups, even though it has no authority in missionary matters.

On of the major accomplishments of the Council of Missions is a common yearly conference for Arab and Kabyle Christians. For many years Tizi-Ouzou was the home for these blessed meetings. In more recent times, there were three local conferences: one at El-Biar and two in Kabylia. In the last few years, the conference at El-Biar has replaced the three local conferences.

This year Arab and Kabyle Christians met at *La Palmeraie* in El-Biar with missionaries and French Christians during the Pentecost weekend. The theme of the conference was "Unchangeable Realities," with topics on "The Unchanging Christ," "The Infallible Book," and "The Invincible Church."

Most of the leaders were European, with two major exceptions, Mr. Saidj, a leader of the Kabyles, and Si M'Barek, an Arab leader. The language used was mostly French in the general meetings with short translations. Arabic and Kabyle wereused for smaller meetings, where about 60% were Arabs or Kabyles. Christians came from Algiers, l'Aruba, Les Ouadhias (Kabylia), Medea, Blida and Tlemcen.

A very kind and fraternal spirit united members of all missionary bodies under the firm presidency of M. March, missionary at La Fayette.

There were, as can be easily understood, many problems, among which were the choice of language; the expression of truth in terms understandable to all, both learned and unlearned; different theological backgrounds. Such problems have to be reconsidered every year, yet the blessings of the conference outweigh them.

Following this, missionaries from all bodies, ministers of the French Reformed Church, and a few chaplains and active laymen met for a three-day conference called a *Pastoral Retreat*. At first the conference was designated for pastors only, but later welcomed missionaries and laymen. The attendence was about 50.

The speaker was the Rev. Canon A. Kenneth Cragg, who presented the core of his thoughts in four lectures. The most interesting fact in this was the atmosphere of the meetings and the reaction of the listeners. In general, it was far more positive and favorable than in 1956, when Dr. Cragg spoke for the first time in Algeria. Some of the members of the French Reformed Church had the feeling of an opened door. They were delighted to reconsider Islam and the Christian approach to Islam in new terms and in a new light.

Like the Arab and Kabyle Christian Conference, the Pastoral Retreat was a precious link between all missionaries, members of churches and mission bodies. It was a vital help towards the creation of a more common vision of our task.

An Old name Kept Fresh

Although there is nothing left in Tarsus of the Apostle Paul except what is known as St. Paul's gate (but even this is not his really as it was built many generations after, and now stands all by itself) yet the Gospel message with which the great apostle was burdened all his life since his new birth continues to be borne today by consecrated men and women.

Late last June was the time for the annual meeting of the American Board Mission in the Near East held in the historic city of Tarsus, southern Turkey, and a few hours drive from Antioch, the city where the followers of the Way were first called Christians. In our present day this whole area is very thinly populated by Christians but it was heartwarming to find here and there people who have caught glimpses of the abundant life through the tireless efforts of ambassadors of Christ who love the people whom they serve.

An Island Near Yet Far

On my way back I stayed overnight in Cyprus to see an old friend. Cyprus, that small island which has not had for about two years a restful night, was now as though by a miracle, a peaceful and delightful place to spend a vacation, if you can afford one! Whilst there albeit so briefly, I learned of the good work of a mission with which N.E.C.C. has had little, if any, relationship. I learned also of smaller groups, mainly from the Armenian community and the armed forces, who meet regularly in various centers in the island for prayer, hymn sing and Bible study. I left the following day convinced that relationships should soon be established with Christians in this part of our region. Many possibilities for good await the the church here.

An Event in Jerusalem

In July the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan for-

mally opened its Synod.This is the first national synod of the Lutheran Church in the Holy Land; it promises to be yet another landmark of the development of missionary work in these lands. The church may now find itself, related as it is to the society of which it is a part, challenged to translate the things of Christ in words and deeds that its people need and appreciate. Our congratulations and prayer for the continuing work of the Mission as well as the new ministry of the Synod.

To Teach and to Learn

Elsewhere is a full report of the summer school in Jerusalem as part of the Study Program. This is now an ongoing activity which increases in its usefulness and the intangible blessings of Christian fellowship. It was a joy to see it in progress.

Where the Need Cries

To attend one meeting of the NECCCRW is sufficient to make one realize the heart-aching misery of over 800,000 people classified as refugees. One would wish to be able to reach each and every one but such as it has been possible to reach within the limitations of personnel and finance, refresh the spirit of every Christian, for relief is here meant to be with a regard to the human soul and the effort must be gratifying humble as it may be.

A Door Closed

In the mail one day in August was a one page printed circular announcing : The Victoria Hospital, Damascus is closed. So plain and so short but what a loss to them who know the long and laudible history of this avenue of Christian witness. We are confident that whilst a visible door may be shut the invisibles remain wide open. We pray God that His work may go forward all ways.

Brother Serve Brother

....and by so doing the brother who serves is rewarded spiritually. A letter has just come from the Rev. Samuel Habib of Egypt who, under what we hope to be the beginning of frequent exchange of leadership within the area, has rendered invaluable services to the churches in Lebanon this summer. Mr. Habib speaks of the benefits that were his. N.E.C.C. is encouraged to go ahead with plans to extend these services to other regions.

THE BOOK CORNER

Reviews and Notes

The Apostles of Palestine: The local background to the New Testament Church, by Eric F.F. Bishop. Lutterworth Press, 1958.

Readers of Mr. Bishop's earlier book, *Jesus of Palestine,* will be anxious to read this book for the light it throws upon the NewTestament. They will not be disappointed. It will be remembered that critics of the earlier book questioned the usefulness of a book that dealt with "Palestinian" as distinct from "Jewish" customs. The author deals with this criticism in his introduction to *Apostles of Palestine,* and entirely justifies his aim and methods.

With regard to style and method, it should be said that the reader would do well to read the Scripture references given at every paragraph *before* reading the text. The book in fact should be taken as a commentary on *The Acts* and other books, and not as a book to be read with only an occasional reference to Scripture.

The reason for this is that the points dealt with are sometimes too meticulous and the reader may tend to be diverted from the main points, if he reads them in quick succession. So strong is the writer's interest in Palestinian customs that there is some danger of irrelevance and the reader may be overloaded with information and detail. Some of the customs may be understood only by those familiar with the Holy Land, and to them it is enthralling. Examples of this are found in references to the festivals of the Churches in Jerusalem.

But when all has been said, the fact remains that all readers will find the book most valuable and illuminating in its understanding of Oriental psychology and ways of speech and action.

The book may in some sense be described as unique because of the author's intimate knowledge of the country, and its Biblical connections. Here the description of the Great North Road is exemplary, and his sympathetic and illuminating references to what St. Paul must surely have

been thinking as he travelled to Damascus.

In passing, and somewhat diffidently, I would question whether he is right in linking the authenticity of the Cenaculum (the place of the Last Supper) with that of David's tomb on the same site. The former may well be authentic, while the latter is doubtful.

Part II treats of smaller points of detail, both in St. Paul's writings and those of other New Testament writers. It may be described as an intimate glossary, throwing light on detail and current practice. The author perhaps attributes too much of self-conciousness in St. Paul's use of particular words. They were, after all, part of his ordinary speech and that of his time, and there is danger in giving them too much importance and significance.

The author calls attention to the fact that the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude are steeped in Old Testament references, showing the contemporary intimacy with the Old Testament. He describes it as "a floating tradition, shared alike by Judaism, Islam and Christianity." This is an important aspect of the book.

It is to be hoped that the reader of this review has gathered that the book is well worth reading and studying, and, as a former pupil of the writer, I should like to pay a tribute to the lifelong study and the knowledge which has produced so valuable a study of the Apostles of Palestine, their life and thought, and its relevance for us today.

Elinor A. Moore
—Jerusalem

City of Wrong, by Kamel Hussein. Translated from the Arabic by Kenneth Cragg. Djambatan, Amsterdam, 1959. pp. 225. xxv.

For rendering attractive a book on ethics, philosophy and religion, Bunyan used the form of an allegory. Some authors have used a novel. Dr. Hussein has built his ideas on a cluster of incidents too loose to be termed a novel, but centralized around one event — the crucifixion of Jesus. Action is mainly on Good Friday, with "flashbacks" to preceding days, and glimpses of the few succeeding days in Galilee.

The nineteen chapters of the book are filled with graphic incidents at a high level of artistry. They excite the interest of philosophers and sociologists and all those alert to religious and social themes. The book should please Muslims and Christians alike; for presumably all the author's ideas are in harmony with Islam and surprisingly few conflict with any Christian teaching.

Is there an anti-Jewish slant? Not for the discerning reader. The

very title shows that the book is negative in that it focuses on wrong, but it makes its positive contribution through seeking remedies for the wrong and giving incidents of triumph over wrong. The wrongdoers on Good Friday happened to be Roman and Jewish, yet it is made clear that they are not considered as nationalities, but as typical representatives of mankind.

The book is greatly enhanced by the translator's introduction and notes. They comprise but an eighth of the volume, yet explain much that would be obscure to the average westerner, and point out much that the average Christian might overlook.

I would not undertake to select any one thesis as paramount in the book. Among hundreds of ethical observations, developed to varying degrees of detail, some of the more striking ones are the following:

I. What moulds human conduct?
   a. Passion vs. Reason in forming judgments, particularly in condemnation.
   b. How to apply ethical standards to daily living. The significance of the Kingdom of Heaven in this regard.
   c. What should be the norm of religious idealism? The dilemna of whether to take the loftiest idealism, or to limit requirements to what is thought of as within the possibility of human accomplishment.

II. Social dilution of the individual sense of guilt, which leads to social crimes. (The counterpart is brought in very little, i.e. the social call to service and heroism which lifts man out of individual meanness to do what would have been impossible for him standing alone. The book is Calvinistic enough to impute this less to social incentive than to the work of God's Spirit in the individual heart.)

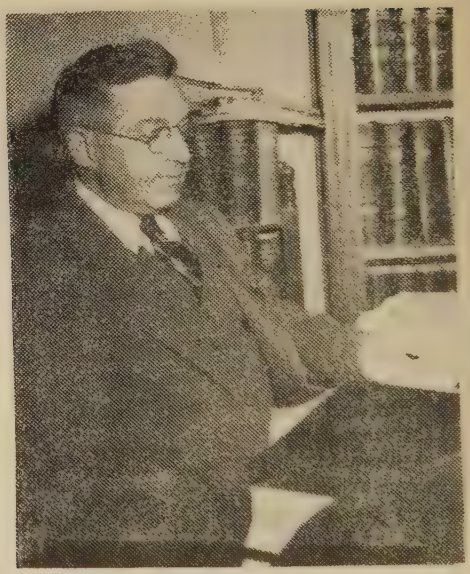
III. Natural law vs. divine intervention in human affairs.
   a. Miracles are not denied.
   b. Miracles are distinguished from coincidence.
   c. "Signs" to be accepted as divine must fall within certain bounds of usefulness to men and appropriateness to God.

IV. Conversion.
   The book portrays numerous instances of profound change in the soul. In some cases, the individual is led to refraining from overt evil. Some cases intimate that a totally new pattern of life resulted. In all cases, it is implied that the change would be permanent.

J. W. Willoughby
—Beirut.

In Memoriam

HENRY ROBERT BOYES



The newspapers stated it briefly although coldly:

> *Dr. Henry Robert Boyes died on Saturday, May* 9, 1959, *in Detroit, Michigan. Dr. Boyes had served as a missionary doctor in Tripoli, Lebanon, for thirty-eight years prior to his retirement on March* 8, 1959.

But to hundreds and thousands of people whom he had in his long service treated, and to scores of nurses and dozens of doctors whom he had trained, this event was a personal tragedy. Henry R. Boyes was a friend and "beloved physician" not only in the area of the Kennedy Memorial Hospital of the Mina, Tripoli, Lebanon, but throughout the entire Near East.

It was not strange to hear that at his funeral the Lebanese Consul in Detroit rose to speak a word of tribute to the work which Dr. Boyes had done for Lebanon, and to drape his casket with the Lebanese flag. It is hard to think of a more concise summary of the Lebanese attitude than this incident, as well as the fact that a few years earlier the Lebanese government had bestowed on him a Medal of Merit.

But all these words do not indicate or testify to the esteem he had won from all his colleagues and associates. He started with a clinic and

left behind him a 100-bed hospital well equipped and adequately housed. He started with a dream and left behind him a "spirit" of service and love.

When Dr. Boyes left the Lebanon on June 20, 1958, his disappointment was great. He was leaving for retirement some sixteen months earlier than he had planned, and at a time when the country was badly disrupted. But, in spite of the tensions and peril, subsequent events proved that it was the right time for both Mrs. Boyes and him to go, because of his physical condition and the grievous local troubles, that threatened to impair the usefulness of the hospital permanently. The disappointment was there, but nearly forty years of service in hope and love left memories and the power of prayer prevailed, enabling him to see the dark clouds of tragedy disappear in Tripoli.

Retirement never really separated the seventy-year old missionary from his people. And now his passing from the scene of active life will continue to fan the flames of appreciation and remembrance. The Rev. E. F. F. Bishop has voiced this for all his many friends in tribute.

> *"It is quite customary to quote St. Paul's appreciative words about St. Luke to the Colossians, when it becomes necessary to pay deserved tribute to any in that succession of missionary doctors, who have meant so much in evangelism as well as in medicine and surgery since the day of David Livingstone a century ago. Said the great Apostle, 'Luke the beloved physician' — 'beloved' in himself of course, not just because he 'laid hands on the sick and they recovered.' It would not be trite to use these Pauline words of 'Harry' Boyes, who gave himself in and for so much of the same area as St. Luke all the centuries ago.*
>
> *"Dr. Boyes was probably the last of a band of missionary doctors whose names will remain revered in so many scattered families for what they did to heal the body and enrich the soul... Had Blyth, the Bishop in Jerusalem, lived a few more years he would have included Henry Boyes in his roll of 'Physician Kings' along with Torrance of Tiberias, or Sterling of Gaza. The Kennedy Memorial Hospital has its memory enhanced through the unstintedly generous service of the doctor and his wife...*
>
> *"There are scores of Christian workers throughout the the area who have been 'mended,' or, as St. Paul must have put it often to himself in partial quotation of the Psalmist, but in thankful appreciation of Luke, his fellow medical missionary, 'restored in body as well as soul,' through the freely, happily and spontaneously rendered ministrations of Dr. Henry Boyes."*

Last Page Jottings

...mission is meeting

Hans Aurbakken, a missionary of the Methodist Church in Algeria, offers the theological as well as the realistic approach to the meeting with Islam in the lead article of this issue. To friends in Hartford School of Missions, and to colleagues in Algeria, his thinking on the subject of *encounter* has meant much.

The Cover

On the cover of this issue in colour, is an eight-pointed star, constructed in coloured tile, the like of which is found in at least seven churches in Iran.

It contains in the center the name of Jesus Christ, surrounded by eight of His titles, each of which has an *alif* pointing to the center.

The titles are as follows:

Bani — The Builder (Heb. i.2)
Sami — The Exalted One
Hami — The Protector
'Afi — The Forgiver
Shafi — The Healer
Hadi — The Guide
Fadi — The Redeemer
Bari — The Deity

World Refugees

During this year, emphasis has been laid upon the plight of refugees. We in the area are mindful of the million Palestine Arab refugees, and 180,000 Algerian refugees in Morocco and Tunisia. They are our concern!

Speaking of Becoming...

We trust that you will find the cover of this issue becoming

Our anxiety to present an attractive face to this issue of the *News Bulletin* will only illustrate the way we exceeded the budget, unless you take this moment of Advent as a time of opportunity to send a gift to help defray the expenses of printing.

A contribution of $1, or 10/—, or LL 4, or more, yearly, will enable us to produce issues that truly represent the work and challenge of the Near East. If you receive more than one copy, you will undoubtedly want to contribute more. Gifts may be made payable to TheTreasurer, NECC, P.O. Box 235, Beirut, Lebanon.

Pax "A God guide..

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* * * *

The Near East Christian Council is made up of four regional councils: the Church Council of Iran; the Egypt Inter Mission Council; the North Sudan Christian Council, and the United Christian Council of South-west Asia (for Syria, Lebanon and Jordan). In these regions and in other countries, church bodies and missionary societies are also members of the Council.

The Near East Christian Council is an organization that seeks to make effective cooperation and witness of the churches in an area extending from Morocco and Algeria to Iran and Arabia, from Turkey to the Sudan and Ethiopia.